



Jodi Ross
Town Manager
978-692-5500

jross@westfordma.gov
www.westfordma.gov/tm

*Special Town Meeting is
October 18, 2010*

*Flu/Pneumonia Clinic
Schedule for the 2010-
2011 Season:*

Thursday, Oct. 21:
12:30PM -3:30PM
Senior Citizens/High Risk
Franco American Club
12:30-1:30> A-J
1:30-2:30 > K-P
2:30-3:30 > Q-Z

Tuesday, Oct. 26:
1:00PM-3:00PM
JV Fletcher Library

Tuesday, Nov. 2:
6:00PM-8:00PM
Millennium

Wednesday, Nov 3:
1:00PM-3:00PM
JV Fletcher Library

Tuesday, Nov. 30:
6:00PM-8:00PM
Millennium

Watch Meetings Online



www.westfordcat.org

Visit
www.westfordma.gov
for current news and
information.

Dear Westford Residents,

September 2010

On Sunday, September 19th a celebration was held, along with a tour of the newly renovated and expanded Cameron Senior Center. The building is beautiful, and functional, and it appears that our seniors and town officials are pleased with the results. We welcomed about 100 men during the annual men's breakfast this week, an increase from 30-something two years ago, and it was a pleasure to be able to hold this event in our very own building.

The Town Hall construction project is also proceeding, and in the final stages of completion. The town is seeking bids for moving the offices back into the building, which should occur in November. We are all very excited to move back to the center of town.

The Coalition for Non-Violence recently launched its own website which may be viewed at www.westfordma.gov/wcnv. We also completed our project of creating and printing a booklet filled with information and resources for anyone affected by domestic violence. These will be distributed through our schools and other town locations, and are being distributed to victims of domestic violence by our police officers. Over 60 residents and town staff have been involved in this coalition and we remain committed to doing what we can to prevent domestic violence.

Town Meeting is swiftly approaching and will be held on Monday night, October 18th, 2010. The warrant contains 24 articles, and was closed and signed by the Board of Selectmen at their September 15th meeting. The warrant is available online on our town website www.westfordma.gov. The specifics of the warrant articles will be outlined in our October newsletter. Please mark your calendars to join us while we conduct important town business at our fall town meeting.

We have begun the process of preparing the Fiscal Year 2012 Annual Town Budget. The Finance Director and I will deliver a preliminary budget message to the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee at the selectmen's September 28th meeting. Once again we have a challenging year ahead of us, but with the full cooperation of all town department heads, rest assured that we will be conservative, creative, and thorough as we examine each department for possible cost savings, while attempting to maintain the level of services you have come to expect.

Sincerely,



Health Department News

Pages 2-4



Preparedness Day September 25

September is National Preparedness Month, an opportunity to renew our commitment to strengthen the ability of individuals and our community to rebound from traumatic, tragic, and unpredictable events. The anniversaries of Hurricane Katrina and 9/11 remind us that the most devastating impacts of disaster are felt at the local level. On September 25th, Westford will be holding an Emergency Preparedness Day from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Abbot Middle School grounds. Events are being hosted by the Health, Police, Fire, Emergency Management and Highway Departments, as well as the Upper Merrimack Valley Medical Reserve Corps www.umvmrc.org, a regional volunteer response team.

Activities planned for the day include:

- “Touch-A-Truck” opportunities. Explore a ladder truck with local firefighters, see how the Highway apparatus works, check out an ambulance, peek into a police cruiser.
- Preparedness exhibits. Learn how to be ready in case of disasters and review equipment that’s available to our local responders.
- 72-hour emergency kits, available at cost (\$40) as a community service. Information on ways to customize materials for your own family will be shared.
- Radio Day. Learn how ham radio and portable communications devices operate, and how you can communicate during power outages.
- Blood Pressure Screenings- offered throughout the day.
- Free Bicycle Helmet Giveaway. Limited quantities, to be given out on a first come, first served basis.
- Children’s Games, Face Painting and Other Activities
- Free Microchips for Animals- being conducted at two sites in Westford for those who previously registered online through the MVMA (MA Vet. Medical Assn.) www.massvet.org. Information on pet preparedness will also be given out that day.

This day provides an opportunity to see emergency equipment and to learn how you can protect yourself, your family, and your business in an emergency. See what items should be included in an emergency supply kit, or purchase one at cost. Get information on how to make your emergency and communication plans so you will be able to focus on safety and act when disaster strikes. Join town departments and response partners on Preparedness Day 25th and participate in the activities. We can become ready and resilient as individuals, families, and communities!



Health Department News

Pages 2-4



Flu/Pneumonia Clinic Schedule for the 2010- 2011 Season

Thursday Oct. 21: 12:30 -3:30 Senior Citizens/High Risk@ Franco American Club
 12:30-1:30> A-J
 1:30-2:30 > K-P
 2:30-3:30 > Q-Z

Tuesday Oct. 26: 1:00-3:00 @ JV Fletcher Library

Tuesday Nov. 2: 6:00-8:00 p.m. @ Millennium

Wednesday Nov 3: 1:00-3:00 @ JV Fletcher Library

Tuesday Nov. 30: 6:00-8:00 @ Millennium

Homebound individuals, who require a home visit, should contact the department @ 978 692-5509 to schedule an appointment.

The 2010-2011 vaccine provides protection against A/H1N1 (pandemic) influenza and two other influenza viruses – influenza A/H3N2 and influenza B. It will not prevent illness caused by other viruses. It takes up to 2 weeks for protection to develop after the shot. Protection lasts about a year. Anyone with an allergy to egg cannot receive this vaccine.

Annual influenza vaccine is recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older. Everyone, regardless of prior vaccination with either seasonal or H1N1 vaccine, will need to be revaccinated to be protected this year.

People at Increased Risk for Influenza-Related Complications:

- All children 6 months through 4 years of age.
- All persons > 50 years of age.
- People 6 months - 18 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy.
- Women who will be pregnant during influenza season and postpartum women.
- People > 6 months of age who have:
- Chronic pulmonary (including asthma), cardiovascular (except hypertension), renal, hepatic, neurological, hematologic, or metabolic disorders, including diabetes;
- Immunosuppression (including immunosuppression caused by medications or HIV);
- Any condition (e.g., cognitive dysfunction, spinal cord injuries, seizure disorders, or other neuromuscular disorders) that can compromise respiratory function or the handling of respiratory secretions or that can increase the risk of aspiration.
- Residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities.
- American Indians/Alaska Natives
- People who are morbidly obese (BMI > 40)

To get up to date information during the flu season , visit the Health Department website at www.westfordma.gov/boh or sign up for our Health Department listserv on our web page.



Health Department News

Pages 2-4



Community Health Needs Survey

Last week we sent a health needs survey to each household in Westford. We have been receiving returns daily! We thank all who have responded already and remind everyone else that they have until September 24th to return the survey to the Health Department. If you need additional surveys, they are available in our office. Your input is vital in assisting us with our planning efforts!

New Allergen Bill

Beginning October 1, 2010 the Massachusetts Food Code will implement an allergy awareness requirement for all food establishments. This new regulation will require food establishments to include on all printed menus and menu boards a clear conspicuous notice requesting a customer to inform the server about the customer's allergy to a major food allergen, before placing an order. The notice will state: Before placing your order, please inform your server if a person in your party has a food allergy. This regulation includes all printed menus materials such as take out, websites and catering menus. Establishments may post signage of the phrase at the point of sale to satisfy the requirement.



Lyme Disease, EEE and West Nile Virus

Please note that the potential threat of exposure to any of these diseases still exists. Please make sure you take adequate measures to be protecting your family from exposure to ticks or mosquitoes. Information can be found at www.mass.gov/dph.

**Highway Department News****Pages 5-6**

Happy Fall, Everyone! August remained a busy and hot month for the Highway Department, being the fourth warmest summer on record! This is the time of year that we're hustling to complete Summer Operations while preparing for Fall/Winter Operations.

Crews continued prepping roads for resurfacing, with gravel and loam placed on the edges. The paving has pretty much run on schedule and we plan to have it completed by the end of the month. Line painting will also be completed at the end of the month.



Micro Surfacing is performed by a contractor, with supplemental help from the Highway Department



Several roads were resurfaced with oil and stone treatment (i.e. Chip Sealing) while more roads were crack filled. Chip Sealing is a significant capital improvement, requiring supervision and inspection by the Highway Department.



Highway Department News

Pages 5-6

New drainage lines have been installed in various areas of the Town and catch basins have been repaired and/or replaced.

This month, the Highway Mechanics will begin gearing up the fleet to prepare for sanding and plowing. Brush is continually being cut on intersections and main roads to address sight problems.



Highway's 1999 John Deere 5410 Brush Tractor

Highway crews are continuously responding to tree issues that may be a hazard to public safety and will hire a tree contractor, when appropriate.



Contracted removal for dead tree on Camp Road

**Conservation Commission News****Pages 7-8****Town's updated Open Space and Recreation Plan wins state approval.**

The town's 2010 update of its Open Space and Recreation Plan has been approved by the States Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. This updated plan was developed by the Conservation Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission with the assistance of the Community Opportunities Group (which also assisted in the development of the town's Master Plan). Conservation/Resource Planner William Turner and Director of Parks & Recreation Department, Pat Savage provided technical support. Public forums were held to solicit citizen input for the plan and town boards and commissions participated in review and comment on drafts of the plan during its progress, and the Conservation and Parks and Recreation Commissions are very appreciative of the efforts of all those who participated.

Development of this plan and its updates is an important part of the Conservation Commission's functions as established under the Conservation Commission Act. (MGL Ch. 40 s. 8C).

Here are some sections from the plan:

"It provides:

- A review and analysis of Westford' natural, cultural and recreational resources;
- Goals and objectives for open space and recreation planning;
- A five-year action plan; and
- An appendix containing lists of flora and fauna, a list of permanently protected open space, a list of privately held open space, a list of town-owned recreation facilities, and a Section 504 review of Westford recreation facilities."

"Westford has long valued its natural resources and open spaces, recognizing the fragile nature of these resources without adequate protective measures in place. This conservation legacy has resulted in a community that is blessed with expansive open spaces, quality public drinking water, extensive wildlife habitats, an abundance of passive and active recreational activities, and a serene scenic quality. Despite these efforts, however, large tracts of undeveloped land remain unprotected and vulnerable. Residents recognize the need to continue and expand these conservation efforts to ensure that the resources they value and that ultimately contribute to the town's quality of life will be protected.

Since the last Plan update "the town has acquired or other wise protected several of its most vulnerable landscapes. Most notable is the purchase of the 287 acre East Boston Camps property. Through this acquisition, Westford was not only able to protect valuable conservation land, natural habitats, and water resources, but will also so be able to create new playing fields on a portion of the site suitable for active recreation.



Conservation Commission News

Pages 7-8

However, Westford recognizes that growth within its boundaries will continue and that it is imperative that new development be balanced with the need to preserve the town's valuable open spaces, natural resources and community character. The town also recognizes the importance of providing quality recreational opportunities for all of its citizens. Therefore, this plan identifies goals and an action plan for the town to follow in order to continue preserving its open spaces, natural resources and community character as well as meet the recreational needs of its residents."

"Westford's 2009 Open Space and Recreation Goals:

- Protection of Westford' ground and surface water resources;
- Protection and enhancement of the town's extensive trail system;
- Protection and management of Westford's remaining open spaces and natural resources;
- Protection of Westford's unique community character; and
- Management and expansion of Westford's existing recreational facilities and programs"

Approval of the plan by the state is an important step, as this now qualifies the town to apply for a number of grant programs that can assist it in meeting its goals.

The plan presents background and a framework for planning and decision-making regarding the town's open space and recreation needs. It contains a host of interesting information regarding the Town and its cultural and natural history, and all residents are invited to review it. It is available online through a link that can be found on the Conservation Commission's page on the town's website, located at www.westfordma.gov/conservation.



Veterans Services News

Page 9

The Veterans Services Department located in the Millennium Building at 23 Depot St. Terry Stader is the Veterans Service Officer (VSO). The VSO's job is to help veterans learn about, apply for, and in some cases, receive benefits. VSOs are veterans themselves and are knowledgeable about an array of federal, state, and local benefits to which you may be entitled. Your VSO can help you fill out application forms for the benefits listed in a helpful booklet, **Massachusetts Veterans' Guide to Benefits**. This booklet can be found at <http://www.mass.gov/veterans>

The Veterans Administration publishes a guide, **Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors**, that is available online at http://www1.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp

Summary of Benefits

Financial Aid – If you are a veteran, dependant of a veteran or a widow/widower of a veteran and struggling financially, you may be entitled to assistance. **Assistance is based on your income and assets, means-based.** This benefit is under **Massachusetts General Law Chapter 115**.

Help for Veterans in danger of foreclosure – To obtain help from a VA financial counselor, veterans can call VA toll-free at 1-877-827-3702 or visit the VA's home loan guaranty program. Web site <http://www.homeloans.va.gov>

Education – All Massachusetts veterans are **entitled to free tuition at Massachusetts' state colleges and universities**. Be sure to see the Veterans Representative at the college you plan to attend, or are attending, to maximize your state and GI Bill Benefits.

Suicide Prevention – **The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available 24 hrs a day 800-273-TALK (8255).** *PTSD is a real item for all who served from D-Day to Fallujah.*

Welcome Home Bonus – Have you received your **Massachusetts Welcome Home Bonus**? Active Duty service during WWII, Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf and the Global War on Terror (GWOT) means you are entitled to a Welcome Home Bonus. Amounts vary depending on assignment and there is no time limit on applying for this bonus. Current award for the GWOT is \$1,000 for service in Afghanistan and Iraq or \$500 for service in other locations. **Update:** *Multiple Welcome Home Bonuses are now authorized. Under new legislation, enacted November 2009, veterans serving multiple deployments since September 11, 2001 are eligible for multiple bonuses:*

Multiple Welcome Home Bonus Requirements:

1. Must show **six months to one-year** residency in Massachusetts before latest deployment.
2. Must have received your original Welcome Home Bonus under Chapter 130 Acts of 2005.
3. Service inside of **Iraq/Afghanistan**, or at least 180 days of active **Foreign Service**.
4. Veteran must have received an **honorable discharge**

5 Years of Cost Free Health Care – OEF/OIF combat Veterans can receive cost free medical care for any condition related to their service in the Iraq/Afghanistan theater for five years after the date of their discharge or release. In order to take advantage of these benefits, OEF/OIF Vets need to enroll in VA's health care system. **Don't delay!**

You can find other useful information at the Westford Veterans Services website <http://westfordma.gov/veterans>.



Library News

Page 10

More Than Ever!

This is our answer to so many queries about the J. V. Fletcher Library! Circulation this past year topped 340,500 -- more than ever! (Over the past two years it has increased almost 8%). Almost 1,000 new users registered in FY10 -- more than ever! This past year the library booked almost 1,800 meeting rooms for community groups and community interests -- more than ever! Westford patrons used our free Museum Passes almost 2,100 times -- more than ever! Library staff hosted almost three hundred programs for all ages -- more than ever! Over one million patrons visited www.westfordlibrary.org -- more than ever! Over 65,000 special items were shipped to and from Massachusetts and US libraries for our patrons -- more than ever! Our website -- with its database and Readers Resources links was accessed 1,045,978 times -- more than ever! With 875 visits per diem, the Library was used more than ever!

Whether you need Silent Study space, wifi with coffee, relaxing magazines, free museum passes, a laptop loan, word processing capability, job seeking support, a fax machine, entertaining family videos, a recommendation for your Book Club or a visit with the gerbils -- we have it here. What does the J. V. Fletcher Library have to offer you and your family? More Than Ever!